

ABSTRACT

An information retrieval apparatus is described for searching a set of information items and displaying the results of the search, the information items each having a set of characterizing information features. The apparatus comprises a search processor to search information items in accordance with user-defined characterizing information features and identify information items with corresponding characterizing information features. A mapping processor generates a map of information items, similar information items mapping to similar positions in the array, from a set of information items identified in the search. The apparatus includes a graphical user interface with a user control for selecting information items, and the search processor refines the search to identify information items relating to the selected information item. As such the user is provided with a facility for refining a search, and searching and navigating large amounts of data are thereby made easier.